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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/759,263	01/17/2004	Mitchell I. Kieffer	45673.2.2	6919

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Allen W. Groenke
Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.
4000 Pillsbury Center
200 South Sixth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1425

EXAMINER

THOMPSON, HUGH B

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3634

DATE MAILED: 07/06/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/759,263

Applicant(s)

KIEFFER ET AL.

Examiner

Hugh B. Thompson II

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 January 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 31-61 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 31-37 and 49 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 38-48 and 50-61 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5-7-04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

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DETAILED ACTION

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 31-61 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting over claims 1-30 of U. S. Patent No. 6,708,800 since the claims, if allowed, would improperly extend the "right to exclude" already granted in the patent.

The subject matter claimed in the instant application is fully disclosed in the patent and is covered by the patent since the patent and the application are claiming common subject matter, as follows: the structure of the sleeves, rings, collars, and connectors within respective telescopic first and second stiles. Furthermore, there is no apparent reason why applicant was prevented from presenting claims corresponding to those of the instant application during prosecution of the application which matured into a patent. See *In re Schneller*, 397 F.2d 350, 158 USPQ 210 (CCPA 1968). See also MPEP § 804.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 50-54, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. With respect to claim 50, line 1, the applicant claims a second ring, however, no first ring has been claimed. Should the claim depend from claim 38?

With respect to claim 52 and 53, there is no antecedent basis for "the ring". Should the claims depend from claim 51? If so, then the claims would be allowable based upon their dependency to claim 51. Claim 51 recites a similar ambiguity with respect to "the second ring" and appears to depend from claim 50. Note that there would still be no antecedent basis for "the sleeve" of claim 51.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 31-33, 35-37, and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by McDonnell et al #5,743,355. McDonnell et al disclose an aluminum or plastic retractable ladder assembly 20 comprised of nested columns 16, 17, 22, 23, rungs 37, 42, 43, spring biased latch mechanisms 57, 60, 61, button/lever 63, and as best seen in Figure 3, a connector/sleeve

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assembly 45, 50, having an annular wall, lip 51 that extend over column 22, and external guiding surface 53.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claim 34 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McDonnell et al as applied to claims 31-33, 35-37, and 49 above, and further in view of Andrey #6,520,291. McDonnell et al fail to disclose a strap for securing the ladder. Andrey teaches the utility of a strap S, used to secure a ladder in a transport condition. Therefore, to one of ordinary skill in the art, it would have been obvious, as a matter of engineering design choice, to provide the ladder assembly of McDonnell et al with a strap as taught by Andrey, so as to secure a ladder in a transport condition.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 38-48 and 50-61 are objected to as being dependent upon rejected claim 31, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and to overcome the Section 112 ambiguities as noted above. The primary reason for the allowable subject matter of claims 38 and 50, is the inclusion of a ladder having first and second column assemblies, the first and second columns having rings respectively coupled thereto, the first ring having an internal guide surface for contacting an exterior surface of the second column, and the second ring having an external guiding surface for contacting an internal surface of another column. For claim 51, it is the inclusion of a collar disposed about the second column between the sleeve and the second ring so that the connector will contact a first landing surface of the collar and a second connector will

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contact a second landing surface of the collar when the ladder is in a collapsed state. The prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the claimed features absent the applicant's own disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hugh B. Thompson II whose telephone number is (703) 305-0102. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday 9 am to 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Cuomo can be reached on (703) 308-0827. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Hugh B. Thompson II
Art Unit 3634
June 26, 2004

HUGH B. THOMPSON II
PRIMARY EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600